LISTING OF CLAIMS

1(currently amended). An electrically conductive article treated by an electroless method comprising:

contacting at least a portion of the surface with a medium comprising water, silica and at least one silicate and having a basic pH and wherein said medium is substantially free of chromates thereby forming a silica containing film,

drying the substrate,

applying a coating selected from the group consisting of latexes, silanes, epoxies, silicone, amines, alkyds, urethanes, polyesters and acrylics.

2(currently amended). The article of Claim 1 wherein the medium further comprises [water, at least one water soluble silicate, colloidal silica,] at least one dopant [and wherein the medium has a basic pH and is substantially free of chromates and VOCs].

3(cancelled).

4(previously presented). The article of Claim 2 wherein the medium comprises water, sodium silicate and colloidal silica.

5(original). The article of Claim 1 wherein the surface comprises at least one member selected from the group consisting of copper, nickel, tin, iron, zinc, aluminum, magnesium, stainless steel and steel and alloys thereof.

6(cancelled).

7(previously presented). The article of Claim 1 wherein the medium comprises at least one dopant selected from the group consisting of zinc, cobalt, molybdenum and nickel.

8(previously presented). The article of Claim 1 wherein said drying is conducted at a temperature of at least about 120C.

9(cancelled).

10(previously presented). The article of Claim 2 wherein the medium comprises a combination comprising water, colloidal silica, greater than about 1 wt.% of sodium silicate and further comprises at least one dopant selected from the group consisting of cobalt, nickel and molybdenum and zinc.

11(cancelled)

12(currently amended). The article of Claim 2 wherein said dopant comprises at least one member selected from the group consisting of [from the group of] titanium chloride, tin chloride, zirconium acetate, zirconium oxychloride, calcium fluoride, tin fluoride, titanium fluoride, zirconium fluoride; ammonium fluorosilicate, aluminum nitrate; magnesium sulphate, sodium sulphate, zinc sulphate, copper sulphate; lithium acetate, lithium bicarbonate, lithium citrate, lithium metaborate, lithium vanadate and lithium tungstate.

13(currently amended). The article of Claim 1 wherein said medium comprises sodium silicate, water, colloidal silica and at least one dopant, and [further comprising] subsequent to said drying rinsing with a second medium comprising water and at least one member selected from the group consisting of

silanes and colloidal silica and [further comprising applying at least one] wherein said [secondary] coating [comprising] comprises at least one epoxy.

14(currently amended). The article of Claim 1 [wherein said rinsing] further comprising subsequent to said drying, rinsing [comprising contacting] said surface with a solution comprising water and at least one dopant.

15(previously presented). The article of Claim 14 wherein the dopant comprises at least one member selected from the group consisting of molybdenum, chromium, titanium, zircon, vanadium, phosphorus, aluminum, iron, boron, bismuth, gallium, tellurium, germanium, antimony, niobium, magnesium, manganese, zinc, aluminum, cobalt, nickel and their oxides and salts.

16(currently amended). The article of Claim 1 further comprising prior to said [exposing] contacting [said surface with a pretreatment comprising] pretreating said surface with at least one member selected from the group consisting of acid and basic cleaners.

17(cancelled).

18(previously presented). The article of Claim 1 wherein said coating comprises at least one silane.

19(currently amended). An article comprising an electrically conductive substrate comprising zinc wherein at least a portion of which has an inorganic silica containing and chromate free surface and at least one composition adhered to said [article] surface and wherein said article [has an ASTM B117 exposure to

white rust of greater than 72 hours] when tested in accordance to ASTM B177 passes at least 72 hours before the formation of white rust.

20(previously presented). The article of Claim 1 wherein said medium further comprises at least one reducing agent selected from the group consisting of sodium borohydride and hypophosphide.

21(currently amended) The article of Claim 1 wherein the medium [comprises an aqueous medium that is heated to] has a temperature of greater than about 50C.

22(currently amended). The article of Claim 19 wherein [the surface comprises at least one silicate and] the adhered composition comprises at least one epoxy.

23(cancelled).